UNITED NATIONS **DP**

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1996/25
21 March 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Second regular session 1996
25-29 March 1996, New York
Item 11 of the provisional agenda
UNDP

UNDP: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM SUPPORT AND SERVICES

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered two conference room papers prepared by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, which are submitted to the Executive Board at its the second regular session of 1996 (25-29 March), pursuant to its decision 95/28, as follows: (a) Follow up to Executive Board decision 95/28, paragraph 14 (DP/1996/CRP.4) and (b) Office of the United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS) (DP/1996/CRP.3). During its consideration of these matters, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Administrator.

2. At its third regular session of 1995, in paragraph 13 of decision 95/28, the Executive Board took "note of the proposal by the Administrator to reserve five posts for subsequent allocation by him and the additional information provided by him thereon and the assurance that they will be dedicated to meeting the organizational objectives of the United Nations Development Programme, ensuring more organization-wide approaches, including improved communications among the regional Bureaux, and servicing the country-office network."

3. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 3 and 10 of DP/1996/CRP.4 that the Administrator has decided to assign four posts to support UNDP activities relating to poverty eradication, comprising a P-5 post assigned to the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), a P-4 post to the Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA), a P-4 post to the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP), and another P-4 post to be shared by the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC), the Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) and the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC).

4. As indicated in paragraphs 11 and 12 of DP/1996/CRP.4, the remaining post has been assigned, at the P-5 level, by the Administrator to the Emergency Response Division (ERD) in the Office of the United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS). The Committee further notes that the results of the classification of these five posts will be confirmed by the Administrator in the context of his next budget presentation.

5. In decision 95/28, paragraphs 35 and 36, the Executive Board approved on a provisional basis the proposal relating to the Office of the United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS), as contained in paragraphs 164-166 of document DP/1995/51. The Administrator was requested to inform the Board further, through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, on the specific functions of the envisaged new posts of OUNS (1 D-2, 1 D-1, 1 P-5 and 1 P-3) in order to enable the Board to review this issue.

6. As indicated in paragraphs 8 and 9 of DP/1996/CRP.3, the OUNS structure is based on the experience obtained during its first year of operations. The Office comprises a Directorate and two divisions: (a) the Division for Resident Coordinator System Support (DRCS) and (b) the Division for Policy Advisory Services (DPAS). DRCS also comprises two sections: (a) the Resident Coordinator Support Section and (b) the Emergency Response Division (ERD). The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 9 and 12 that the Directorate is headed by a D-2 level Director and that DRCS is also headed by another D-2 level Director. The Committee recalls that the Administrator had proposed and the Executive Board approved two Professional posts for the humanitarian programme (1 D-2 and 1 P-5) as part of the staff of OUNS. The Committee believes that OUNS is unnecessarily fragmented in small organizational units, which are staffed with Professional posts at levels that appear to be higher than may be warranted by the functional responsibilities described in DP/1996/CRP.3. From the information provided in the document and by the representatives of the Administrator, the Committee was unable to ascertain the chain of command of OUNS. The Committee further notes from the staffing table provided in section IV of the document that the Office has a high ratio of General Service to Professional posts (9 Professionals supported by 8 General Service posts).

7. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 5-7 of DP/1996/CRP.3 that "the Secretary-General entrusted the Administrator with the overall responsibility for improving the coordination of operational activities for development, including the strengthening of the resident coordinator system. It is indicated that "the Administrator established the Office of the United Nations System Support and Services to support him in fulfilling the mandate given by the General Assembly and the Secretary General." In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls General Assembly resolution 50/120, paragraph 38, whereby the General Assembly invited "the United Nations system, including the funds and programmes, specialized agencies and the Secretariat, to provide, as appropriate, support to the resident coordinator system". It is not clear to the Advisory Committee whether any follow-up to this resolution has been made.

8. The Advisory Committee exchanged views with representatives of the Administrator on the subject of the mandate of OUNS, as indicated in paragraphs 5 and 16, whereby OUNS will assist the Secretary-General "in ensuring policy coherence and enhancing coordination within the United Nations

itself, in particular among headquarters departments, the regional economic commissions and the funds and programmes of the organization".

9. The Advisory Committee recalls its view as indicated in paragraphs 10, 11 and 38 of its report DP/1995/52. The Advisory Committee believes that the Secretary-General should clarify further the respective roles of UNDP and of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD). The Committee believes that the information contained in DP/1996/CRP.4, paragraphs 18-21, does not explain satisfactorily the respective roles of UNDP and DPCSD.

10. The Advisory Committee reiterates its view that, as indicated in paragraph 7A.2 of the proposed programme budget of the United Nations for the biennium 1996-1997, DPCSD also has principal responsibility, inter alia, to assist "the Secretary-General in the exercise of his responsibilities for system wide-coordination and assisting him, along with other organizational entities, in ensuring policy coherence, coordination and efficient management". The Committee is of the view that these activities and those entrusted by the Secretary-General to the Administrator in this regard should be financed by the United Nations regular budget so that resources pledged for operational activities in the field are not diverted in support of system-wide policy coordination matters. Furthermore, the Committee reiterates its view that there should be no need to request additional posts under the United Nations regular budget for these functions. Under the circumstances, the Committee recommends that, with the exception of those posts already approved by the Executive Board for the humanitarian and emergency response activities of UNDP, approval of the other posts for OUNS be deferred.